

COALITION ON REVIVAL: BUILDING A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

October 15, 1995 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org) -

The Coalition on Revival (COR) has announced a series of conferences through which it hopes to promote unity and social/political effectiveness in the "entire Body of Christ." The COR was founded in 1984 by Jay Grimstead. The first of these conferences is scheduled to be held August 18-23, 1996, at Campus Crusade's Arrowhead Springs Hotel in California. D. James Kennedy will be the moderator. Grimstead said he desires to see "delegates from all the major denominations, schools, churches, and Christian organizations" to come together and "arrive at a broad consensus within the Body of Christ on a number of important issues which now divide the Church."

How can truth come forth from a stew of error? How can pure Bible doctrine come out of the hodgepodge of doctrinal confusion represented by "all the major denominations, churches, and organizations"? It is impossible.

The COR is an extremely dangerous organization with an unscriptural goal. In the summer 1995 issue of the COR paper, Crosswinds, that goal is spelled out plainly:

"A New Reformation is being born. ... We expect this embryonic renewal to keep growing until it becomes a spiritual/social 'avalanche, tidal wave, and force fire' to impact every nation where Christians make it happen by the power of God and the winsomeness of truth. ... In each nation thus awakened, Christians could advance the Kingdom of God on earth and indeed **WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE A BETTER WORLD** and take it as far as we possibly can prior to Jesus' return. Crosswinds writers are committed to that kind of Christianity and that kind of **CIVILIZATION-CHANGING GOAL**, without always agreeing about how far we really can take it. **EVERYONE IN OUR ORBIT HAS THE FREEDOM TO BE A PRE-, POST- OR AMILLENIALIST, OR TO BE A CALVINIST, ARMENIAN, CHARISMATIC, NON-CHARISMATIC, HIGH-CHURCH OR LOW CHURCH PERSON, AND SO ON.**"

The COR publication complains that Christianity since 1830 has become "Defeatist and pessimistic, rather than optimistic, about Christianizing society in this age ... **ESCAPIST AND RAPTURE-ORIENTED**, rather than eager to have 'God's will done on earth' now ... Inclined to consider the Kingdom of God as primarily 'spiritual' during this age, rather than **A REAL, ACTIVE, KINGDOM ON EARTH NOW, WHICH GOD INTENDS TO HAVE PERMEATE, INFLUENCE, AND ULTIMATELY OVERCOME ALL OTHER SOCIETIES, 'kings,' states and continents for His glory.**"

In a two-page letter in July to COR friends and co-workers, Grimstead said, "... those involved in various cities are seeking to identify leaders who could join together around the large dream of **CHRISTIANIZING THEIR OWN CITY AND STATE** and encourage them to form

themselves into the 10 committees for Law, Government, Economics, Education, Medicine/Family, The Media, The Arts, etc."

Beware of this type of thing. True Christian unity is a local church matter. Consider these key passages on unity: Romans 15:5,6; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 2:2. All of these commands in regard to unity are directed to churches. Only in the local church can Christians be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). Only in the local church can Christians "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27).

Further, the New Testament does not instruct the churches to build the kingdom of God on earth or to attempt to set up a Christian society. That is the type of error which produced the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant state churches. The church is not a political institution; it is a spiritual entity composed of baptised believers, organized according to the New Testament pattern, and committed to the whole counsel of New Testament doctrine. Its work is the Great Commission of world evangelism, not political/social kingdom building.

Five times the risen Lord Jesus Christ repeated and emphasized the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:44-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8).

When the disciples asked Christ about the kingdom, He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8).

There will be no kingdom building until the King comes. That is not what time it is on God's calendar. The Apostles did not attempt to Christianize the Roman Empire, except to preach the Gospel and plant churches and to influence society spiritually through changed lives.

Certainly it is not wrong for the individual Christian to be involved in the political process, to vote and pray and work for political change. But this is not the same as attempting to build the kingdom of God on the earth or to Christianize society or to form ecumenical socio-political change coalitions. The primary command given to the Christian in this age in regard to political activity is to pray "for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Why does God want us to pray for a tranquil society? "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3,4). Christian, are you praying for your nation?